Amendments to the Claims

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) An amidated pectin ~~obtainable from a process according to claim 10,~~ prepared by a process comprising:

contacting a starting pectin material with a bio-catalyst capable of de-esterifying the starting pectin material to produce a de-esterified pectin having a high molecular weight, and

contacting the de-esterified pectin with ammonia to produce an amidated pectin,

wherein the amidated pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R2, of intrinsic viscosity of the ~~starting~~ de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.01 to 1.15 ~~1.25~~.

13. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~according to~~ of claim 12, characterized by having a ratio, R2, of intrinsic viscosity of the ~~starting~~ de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.03 to 1.15 ~~1.18~~.

14. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~according to~~ of claim 12, ~~characterised~~ characterized by having a ratio, R2, of intrinsic viscosity of the ~~starting~~ de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.04 to 1.15.

15. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~according to~~ of claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 30% or less and a degree of amidation of 18% or less.

16. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~according to~~ of claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 10-20% and a degree of amidation of 10-20%.

17. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~according to~~ of claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 12-18% and a degree of amidation of 5-30%.

18. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~obtainable from a process according to~~ of claims ~~1~~ 12, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", above 0.8.

19. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~obtainable from a process according to~~ of claims ~~1~~ 12, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.8-1.0.

20. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin ~~obtainable from a process according to~~ of claims ~~1~~ 12, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.85-0.95.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~The use of an~~ A foodstuff comprising an amidated pectin according to claims 12 ~~comprising in foodstuffs~~.

22. (Currently Amended) The foodstuff of claim 21, wherein the foodstuff is a ~~use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 comprising~~ in jams ~~and~~ or jelly ~~jellies~~.

23. (Currently Amended) The foodstuff of claim 21, wherein the foodstuff is a ~~use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 comprising in~~ dairy products.

24. (Withdrawn -- Currently Amended) ~~The use of~~ A pharmaceutical product comprising an amidated pectin according to claims 12 ~~comprising in pharmaceutical products~~.

25. (Withdrawn -- Currently Amended) ~~The use of~~ A personal care product comprising an amidated pectin according to claims 12 ~~comprising in personal care products~~.

26. (Withdrawn -- Currently Amended) ~~The use of~~ A household product comprising an amidated pectin according to claims 12 ~~comprising in household products~~.

27. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 12, wherein the de-esterified pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R, of molecular weight of the starting pectin material to the molecular weight of the de-esterified pectin up to 1.15.

28. (New) An amidated pectin obtainable from a de-esterified pectin having a high molecular weight, wherein the amidated pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R2, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.01 to 1.15.

29. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a ratio, R2, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.03 to 1.15.

30. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a ratio, R2, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.04 to 1.15.

31. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 30% or less and a degree of amidation of 18% or less.

32. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 10-20% and a degree of amidation of 10-20%.

33. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 12-18% and a degree of amidation of 5-30%.

34. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", above 0.8.

35. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.8-1.0.

36. (New) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.85-0.95.